

## Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /072 W

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R 191444Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6425

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SP, ELAB

SUBJECT: ACTIVITY IN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS FIELD

REF: (1) MADRID 2942; (2) MADRID 3197

1. THE PAST WEEK BROUGHT TWO EVENTS OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE ON THE CHURCH-STATE FRONT. FIRST, THE SPANISH EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE (THE CATHOLIC HIERARCHY'S TOP BODY) ON JULY 13 ISSUED A DOCUMENT ENTITLED "CHRISTIAN ORIENTATIONS ON POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION", INTENDED TO SERVE AS A GUIDELINE FOR CATHOLICS WITH RESPECT TO THE DUTIES

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AND RIGHTS OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL AND

SOCIAL ARENA. SECONDLY, THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION ANNOUNCED ON JULY 15 THAT IN A MESSAGE TO THE POPE, THE KING HAS FORMALLY COMMUNICATED HIS INTENTION TO GIVE UP HIS VETO POWER OVER THE NAMING OF BISHOPS. BISHOP YANES (SECRETARY, EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE) CHARACTERIZED THE KING'S GESTURE AS A STEP OF "ENORMOUS CONSEQUENCE" FOR THE CHURCH AND LEADING TO A "NEW JURIDICAL CONFIGURATION IN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS."

2. IN THEIR LENGTHY DECLARATION (CARRIED IN THREE INSTALLMENTS JULY 14-16 BY CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT YA), THE SPANISH BISHOPS SINGLED OUT SUCH THEMES AS: THE DANGER OF VOTER APATHY, THE ABSOLUTE CONDEMNATION OF VIOLENCE, THE NEED FOR A "WORTHY" REFERENDUM, SUBSEQUENT ELECTIONS, AND CLARIFICATION OF POLITICAL PARTY PLATFORMS, SUPPORTED THE RIGHT TO STRIKE AND FREE TRADE UNIONISM WHILE EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR CONFLICT. IT ALSO STRESSED AGRARIAN REFORM.

3. THE CHURCH'S POSITION ON POLITICAL REFORMS WAS ALREADY WELL-KNOWN AND THE DOCUMENT CAUSED LITTLE SURPRISE, BUT THE CHURCH HAS NEVER BEEN MORE DETAILED ON THIS TOPIC AND THE DECLARATION SERVES AS A TIMELY REMINDER OF THE SPANISH BISHOPS' LARGELY REFORMIST VIEW-POINT. INDEED, A LEADING OBSERVER OF THE CHURCH-STATE SCENE (ABC'S RELIGIOUS EDITOR, FR. MARTIN DESCALZO) TOLD THE EMBASSY ON JULY 16 THAT WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN A BOMBSHELL TWO YEARS AGO WAS NOW ONLY A "NORMAL" EXPRESSION.

4. THE EMBASSY HAD HEARD EARLIER THAT HAD THE GOVERNMENT CRISIS NOT COME ALONG WHEN IT DID, MODIFICATIONS TO THE CONCORDAT WOULD HAVE BEEN SIGNED IN ROME IN EARLY JULY. AS ENVISIONED, THERE WAS TO HAVE BEEN A SORT OF TRADE-OFF WITH THE GOS AGREEING TO RELINQUISH ITS VETO POWER OVER THE NAMING OF NEW BISHOPS, AND THE VATICAN IN TURN RELINQUISHING THE SPECIAL LEGAL STATUS AND PRIVILEGES (THE SO-CALLED ECCLESIASTICAL "FUERO") UNDER WHICH PRIESTS ENJOYED IMMUNITY FROM CIVIL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CRIMINAL LAW PROCEDURES (REFS). WITH THE PERSONAL DELIVERY OF THE KING'S MESSAGE BY MARQUES DE MONDEJAR (CHIEF OF THE KING'S HOUSEHOLD), THE BALL IS NOW CLEARLY IN THE VATICAN'S COURT. FR. MARTIN DESCALZO CHARACTERIZED THIS LATEST DEVELOPMENT AS OF "GREAT IMPORTANCE"--A "WISE AND GENEROUS" MOVE, ANOTHER "SIGN OF THE TIMES" TO THAT AS IT MAY, THE ABOVE IS CONFIRMATION ONCE AGAIN THAT THERE WILL BE NO NEW CONCORDAT AS SUCH BUT RATHER

THAT THE PATTERN WILL BE A SERIES OF ACCORDS ON A STEP-BY-STEP BASIS--PRESUMABLY BEGINNING, AS REPORTED EARLIER, WITH A FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT. THIS STEP BY THE KING, FURTHERING AS IT DOES THE STRONG TREND TOWARD SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE, WILL BE APPLAUDED BY VIRTUALLY ALL SECTORS EXCEPT THE EXTREME RIGHT. IF THE VATICAN NOW AGREES TO FURTHER STEPS TOWARD CHURCH-STATE ACCORD AND A NEW RELATIONSHIP, THIS WILL BE A HELP TO THE SUAREZ ADMINISTRATION IN ESTABLISHING ITS CREDENTIALS AS AN EFFEGIVE GOVERNMENT. STABLER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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